

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION  
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Friday, April 17, 2009, at 2 p.m.  
in the Norman D. Hébert, LL.D. Meeting Room  
(Room EV 2.260) on the SGW Campus

PRESENT

Voting members: Mr. G. Beasley; Prof. L. Blair; Mr. N. Burke; Prof. J. Chaikelson; Prof. M. Charland; Mr. E. Chivi; Dr. L. Dandurand; Mr. K. Diaz; Prof. L. Dyer; Prof. M. Fritsch; Mr. E. Fuchs; Prof. B. Gamoy; Prof. J. Garrido; Mr. C. Goldfinch; Dr. D. Graham; Ms. D. Guy; Prof. A. Hamalian; Mr. S. Jack; Ms. K. Kashfi; Prof. S. Lister; Dean J. Locke; Prof. W. Lynch; Mr. W. MacGregor; Prof. S. McSheffrey; Prof. S. Mudur; Prof. N. Nixon; Mr. P.R. Osei; Prof. M. Pugh; Prof. C. Ross; Dean S. Sharma; Associate Dean T. Stathopoulos; Prof. P. Stoett; Prof. P. Thornton; Prof. C. Trueman; Ms. R. Wilcox; Dr. J. Woodsworth

Non-voting members: Ms. K. Assayag; Dr. D. Boisvert (*Speaker*); Mr. M. Di Grappa; Mr. L. English; Me B. Freedman; Ms. L. Healey

ABSENT

Voting members: Dean R. Drew; Prof. A. English; Prof. J. Garfin; Prof. M. Jamal; Ms. F. Karimi; Prof. C. Lam; Prof. G. Leonard; Ms. A. Peek; Prof. M. Peluso; Prof. F. Shaver; Ms. M. Sheppard; Prof. W. Sims; Ms. S. Turnin; Mr. M.F. Uddin; Dean C. Wild

1. Call to order

The Speaker called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

At the request of the President, Agenda items 6 and 8 were interchanged.

R-2009-3-1 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Stathopoulos, Thornton), it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda be approved as amended.*

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of March 20, 2009

Prof. Mudur noted that he was present at the last Senate meeting.

R-2009-3-2 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Goldfinch, Kashfi), it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of March 20, 2009 be approved, subject to a correction to the attendance.*

4. Business arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda

As a follow-up from the January 2009 Minutes regarding admission deadlines, the Provost apprised members that Vice-Provost Dyens will be submitting his report to SCAPP in the near future and thereafter to Senate for information.

5. Report and recommendations from the Academic Programs Committee (Document US-2009-3-D1)

5.1 Major undergraduate curriculum changes – John Molson School of Business (Document US-2009-3-D2)

R-2009-3-3 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Sharma, Diaz), it was unanimously resolved that the major undergraduate curriculum changes in the John Molson School of Business, set out in Document US-2009-3-D2, be approved as recommended by the Academic Programs Committee in Document US-2009-3-D1.*

5.2 Major undergraduate curriculum – School of Extended Learning (Document US-2009-3-D3)

A motion was moved by Dean Burke, seconded by Mr. Beasley, that the major undergraduate curriculum changes in the School of Extended Learning, set out in Document US-2009-3-D3 be approved.

A discussion ensued, during which the following concerns were raised and questions asked:

- a) It seems that while Senate can create a slot course stub, the current Senate legislation provides that the content of each slot course can only be decided by the relevant Faculty Council and does not come back to Senate for approval. Given the fact that the Council of the School of Extended Learning has yet to be established, who will be responsible for the creation and content of the slot courses?
- b) Clarification was sought whether this will be a required course, given that the current legislation or rule seems to stipulate that slot courses cannot be required courses.
- c) This course is a version of the StepUp course which was offered by the Department of Continuing Education over the last two years. Has its effectiveness been evaluated?
- d) The tuition fee for a 4-credit course is substantially higher than that of the former StepUp course, particularly for out of province or international students.
- e) Why is this a 4-credit course?
- f) The fact that the credits cannot be transferred into a program is problematic in the long term. Moreover, the higher cost of this course does not create any incentive for students to register and, on the contrary, is creating an additional financial barrier which could hinder the retention rate.

In response to the above, Dean Burke conveyed the content of the courses, specifying that they will be complementary to programs. He added that the Council of the School of Extended Learning is in the process of being formed but has not yet been established by the Board. In the meantime, its curriculum committee is working with APC. The practice of offering non-transferable “hors programme” credits is common among other universities. These out-of-program credits are designed to benefit students but could eventually be accepted by Faculty Councils at their discretion.

While sensitive to the financial plight of students, Dr. Graham noted that the cost of the course is an investment in students' success which will be repaid down the road when they succeed and complete their degrees. He noted that a variety of options have been discussed, such as a partial tuition credit for successful completion of the course. Moreover, credit courses can be an incentive as they allow students to maintain their full-time status, thereby rendering them eligible for financial aid.

With respect to the legality of APC creating the content of the slot course, Me Freedman confirmed that APC had acted appropriately, in accordance with the legal principle of delegation of authority. As a result, although Senate has delegated its authority to a lower body, it has not abdicated its powers and therefore it has the authority to approve the motion.

Despite the above explanations, some Senators were uncomfortable with approving the proposal, which led Prof. Hamalian to move a motion to table this matter. The motion, seconded by Prof. Lynch, was carried by a majority.

5.3 Major undergraduate curriculum changes – University Retroactive Withdrawal Committee  
(Document US-2009-3-D4)

R-2009-3-4 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Graham, Stathopoulos), it was unanimously resolved that the major undergraduate curriculum changes regarding the University Retroactive Withdrawal Committee, set out in Document US-2009-3-D4, be approved as recommended by the Academic Programs Committee in Document US-2009-3-D1.*

6. Discussion of the Strategic Plan (Document US-2009-3-D8)

Dr. Woodsworth outlined the context of the strategic plan. This version takes into account the feedback resulting from the open consultation process and reflects the work of the three Presidential Panels and the Provost's Working Group on Teaching and Learning. The goals and objectives are grounded on assumptions and factual information about the University itself and its external environment. Each strategic direction is accompanied by some sample actions. Referring to the implementation section, she pointed out that the academic plan is at the core of the other implementation plans (financial, human resources, communications, etc.) which will help turn the strategic goals into plans and plans into action. Progress of the strategic initiatives will be measured and monitored. The President underlined that the objective of today's discussion is to obtain feedback from Senators and incorporate further suggestions into the plan. Comments and suggestions provided by Senators are summarized as follows:

- Some Senators thanked the President and her team for the work in putting this document together.
- A lot of time is spent looking at processes and documents but efforts should be concentrated on the internal allocation process which should be a priority.
- With regard to the Vision, we should aim to rank higher.
- On page 7, statistics on graduate students are not indicated.
- On page 8, the number of graduate programs should be verified as the number presented appears to be very high.
- On page 8, under the last bullet, the existence of a program in Software Applications and Systems should be verified.

- On page 13, the Montreal location, while being important, should not be listed as the first advantage.
- Page 23 refers to a rigorous assessment of programs and academic staffing plan. Is there such a rigorous plan for the non-academic elements?
- The plan should indicate that Concordia will be a leader in work/study programs (Co-op) and disseminate this in the community.
- The plan seems to be setting lofty goals that are difficult to achieve in light of the current economic context. For example, the plan encourages student/faculty interaction which will be difficult to achieve if class sizes increase further to budget cuts.
- There is a lack of institutional memory and some suggestions proposed in the plan have been implemented in the past, such as the creation of a teaching handbook in 1994 as well as a long-term development plan.
- A university is only as good as its faculty and the plan does not speak about faculty being the best they can be.
- The faculty/student ratio is high and needs to be lower.
- A lot of universities offer the same programs and the deciding factor for an applicant often comes to the student experience and student engagement. Therefore, this is an important selling point.
- The document does not speak to change but there is nothing wrong with keeping some solid traditions.
- Reference to best practices in administration is much better than superb management.
- Graduate students are doing extremely well and this is not reflected in the document.

The President briefly responded to some of the comments. She thanked Senators for their input and encouraged them to send her any other comments within the next ten days to [president@concordia.ca](mailto:president@concordia.ca).

## 7. Report of other Senate Standing Committees

### 7.1 Finance (Document US-2009-3-D6)

Dr. Boisvert apprised Senators of Steering Committee's decision that the exercise on course costing as well as the report on comparative universities spending trends will be presented at the next Senate meeting.

Prof. Hamalian asked that her formerly-stated request that the Finance Committee look at the functioning of the central hiring pool be noted in the Minutes.

### 7.2 Library (Document US-2009-3-D7)

In response to a query, Mr. Beasley outlined the objective of the sustainability audit of the Library administration office and explained how it was conducted.

In regards to the noise level in the Webster Library, he acknowledged that lack of space is the root of the problem. A long-term solution to the Library's space needs is being looked into but, in the interim, all efforts will be made to improving the existing study areas, including an office reorganization that will bring some additional space for this Fall.

### 7.3 Research

The Research Committee has not met since the last Senate meeting.

### 8. Report of the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee on the Report of the Provost's Working Group on Teaching and Learning (Document US-2009-3-D5)

The Provost gave the background which led to the establishment of the Working Group and suggested that Senate act as a committee of the whole to provide the overall reaction of Senators on the proposed recommendations. Comments are summarized as follows:

- It would be important to include a representative from Counseling and Development as a member of the Working Group.
- Section 3.1 should speak to not only creating successful employees but also successful leaders.
- The statement on retention in section 3.3 does not take into account our large percentage of part-time students.
- What is the correlation between developing a better Centre for Teaching and Learning Services and a higher retention rate?
- Caution was advised to ensure that recommendations do not intrude on matters covered by the collective agreement, such as recommendation 13.
- Some self-evident statements are referenced while some less obvious ones are not.
- This document is very useful and should be sent to Faculty Councils for their input.
- One Senator opined that the reason to consider consolidating the Student Learning Centre and the Centre for the Teaching and Learning Services is not clear while another suggested that consideration should be given on how they interact rather than on consolidating them.
- Some recommendations are difficult to implement, such as the one requiring professors to give prompt feedback to students in the case of large classes.
- Section 8 regarding core competencies seems to suggest the offloading of the responsibility on individual departments and programs as opposed to defining a University-wide approach.
- The current climate of making do with less is at odds with several recommendations formulated in the report.
- The report contains a number of conflicting recommendations, such as the active promotion of online courses while seeking a greater retention rate and better classroom experience.
- The 46 recommendations are a bit unwieldy. They should be prioritized according to a given timeline in order to render them actionable. Perhaps this could be done by SCAPP. This sentiment was communicated by several Senators.

Dr. Graham thanked Senators for their comments. He acknowledged the difficulty of bringing the recommendations in a coherent manner but specified that the report had not been written as an action document. Rather, it was meant to flow into the strategic planning process.

### 9. Remarks from the President (Document US-2009-3-D9)

Dr. Woodsworth conveyed the highlights contained in her written report. She outlined her continuing tour of the University's research centres and laboratories, accompanied by

Dr. Dandurand. Up of to now, she had visited five of them and noted how enlightening and gratifying it is to see researchers and students conducting groundbreaking work.

She was pleased with the success of the first President's Conference held on April 6, with three sessions open to the Concordia community as well as the general public. The theme of the conference was "Understanding Desire". All sessions were very well attended. Moreover, the afternoon session was web cast to some schools and recorded by Mountain Lake PBS for broadcast in May. She thanked Vice-Provost Dyens who was the driving force together with the entire group who organized this event.

Dr. Woodsworth concluded her remarks by apprising Senate that she had hosted an additional three get-togethers with faculty, staff and students, now known as "*Conversations with the President*", bringing the total to six conversation held up to date. Six more dates are planned for the Fall term and will be advertised in advance.

10. Update of the Advisory Search Committee for a Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science

Dr. Graham informed Senate that he had reached an agreement in principle with the preferred candidate and that a recommendation will be brought for approval by the Board of Governors at its May meeting.

11. Items for information

There were no items for information.

16. Question period

No questions were asked.

17. Other business

There was no other business to bring before the meeting.

18. Next meeting

The Speaker noted that the next meeting of Senate will be held on Friday, May 8, 2009, at 2 p.m., in Room EV 2.260.

19. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Danielle Tessier  
Secretary of Senate